

**A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE THEATRE OF ABSURD
WITH THE REFERENCE OF *THE CHAIRS* BY IONESCO**



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'The Chairs' play belongs to **Theatre of Absurd** in which Ionesco depicts how waiting meets a false end. Language used as a mechanism for destruction but with different manner, characters' words have double meanings. *The Chairs'* depicts the anguish and hopelessness of communication.

In a lighthouse on the edge of civilization an old couple waits, we're never sure if this is their home as there're no recognizable signs of domesticity. They're the aliens on the place. The old couple's working in a garden, presents the idea of Adam and Eve, and Garden of Eden. Perhaps they try to recover the lost paradise with a tricky message that will deliver by the orator. The old woman proves a **'helpmeet'** by arranging the chairs for the invisible guests.

The relationship that exist between the couple, the words and phrases they speak and the games they play are either a familiar **'code'** that has developed through so many years of marriage, or the writer is seeking to play with our expectations, to confuse, confound and contradict.

The guests are invisible yet they act as they are very real; welcoming them by names, ushering them to hastily retrieved seats, and engaging them in ceaseless conversation. The invisible elite society soon fill the stage. A person who physically existed hasn't ability to communicate properly because of his different language and the invisible people have apt sense of communication with the old couple.

Every era has questions about mortality, our existence and place in the world, with clashing idea that **'God's will'** had been the satisfying

answer to all the difficulties of mankind. **Nietzsche** pronounced the **death of God** in the late 19th century, and regarded a blasphemer like **Galileo** who claimed that we're not the center of God's universe but just revolve around the sun.

Nietzsche's words raised basic question that if God doesn't exist, why should we continue to practice all moral and religious laws? Chaos and nihilism seem inevitable, our actions count for nothing. There's no promise of heaven, no threat of hell, but only certainties are old age, death and nothingness. From this darkness comes the '**Theatre of the Absurd**', Beckett, Genet, Ionesco, and Admov are its famous writers. They didn't try to answer the existential questions posed by Nietzsche but show the character living and breathing these dilemmas and crises of daily life; with acute awareness that what value do human relationships have? Is communication and interaction of any benefit? So we appreciate the gravity of **Sisyphus' Myth's** opening lines.

The characters live in extreme situations where the fabric of their reality has been ripped apart. They've little or no sense of their past, no ambition to see beyond their current situation, and hope is an alien concept for them. For many sensitive men, the world has lost its meaning and simply ceased to make sense, the foundations of hope and logic collapsed.

World War I, II affected the absurd writers a lot with addition of their family background, and childhood experiences of isolation, develop their concept that man was the architect of his own destruction. There seems an endless popular fascination that how as a species we meet our end. It happened to the dinosaurs over 65 million years ago, so why should we feel so safe?

Hence, if we see Absurdism as a reaction against wars, we in the 21st century have our own demons to contend with i.e. civil war, terrorism, global warming, environmental concerns and natural disasters, we we're much **ABSURDIST**s than absurdisms.

The Chairs' characters have different memories of their shared history, relations and confused roles. Husband and wife play the role of parent and child as well. The only sure thing of life is that we will die and we just clocking time until then. They're ghost like empty shells, no faith comforts these character, values are worthless, and language is powerless futile way of communication.

By seeing these dramas performed, we're not entertained but challenged. The setting of absurd dramas is non-specific, barren wastelands, with no sense of domesticity or familiarity, no contemporary furniture and props, but a nameless, placeless, cold and unfamiliar world. **Strindberg's Dream play** is also an example of absurdism, where everything can happened, time and place don't exist; the characters split, double, and multiply but neither consciousness, nor logic, and nor law rule over them.

The Chairs reflects the stasis of the society both politically and socially. We're in limbo, where ministerial roles are largely nameless and faceless. The old man has a message extracted from his life experiences, and words of wisdom, he wants to share with the world. But due to lack of confidence, he hired a skilled Orator for this purpose. The old couple prepare the room, where they assemble the guests to hear the message. Believing that their presence will distract the orator, so ultimately the sacrificed themselves. But language proves a limited and meaningless means of communication when orator remains unable to deliver any proper word.

Ionesco migrated his father's country, in his new family he feels isolated and alien, and missed parental love; he had to learn a new language and this experience depicts in his work in the form of certain hostility to an estrangement from language itself. For him 'colors and nothing but colors are the only language that can speak'.

In short, the words and letters written on the board are meaningless. **The Myth of Sisyphus is the ideal image of the absurd man.** No society has been able to abolish human sadness, no political system can save us from the pain of living, from our fear of death and our thirst for the absolute; it's the human condition that directs the social condition, not vice versa.